Remarks

Claims 39-54, 56 and 58-60 are pending.

Claims 39-54, 56 and 58-60 stand rejected.

Claims 39, 46 and 59 have been amended.

Claims 39-54, 56 and 58-60 are submitted herein for review.

No new matter has been added.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected independent claim 46 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maloney et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,555,299) in view of Rogers et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,617,471). Claims 39 and 59 are rejected as above, further in view of Bauer et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,899,375). Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's assessment and submit the following remarks in response.

The present invention as claimed in independent claims 39, 46 and 59 is directed to a method for use in a directory assistance telecommunication system. In each of the claims, the method includes a first service provider receiving from a caller a current request for a suggestion of a third party provider of a product or service, among a plurality of available third party providers, desired by the caller, where the third party provider is not associated with the first service provider.

The first service provider then retrieves the data concerning one or more prior requests by the caller to the first service provider and utilizes at least the retrieved data concerning one or more prior requests to select a third party product or service provider, among the plurality of available third party providers, not associated with the first service provider, in response to the current request.

Independent claim 39 further recites that the caller can return to the first service provider without terminating the call, automatically, in response to a predetermined signal received by the first service provider from the caller's communications device.

Independent claim 46 further recites assigning an agent in the first service provider, where the agent communicates with the third party product or service provider on behalf of the caller to satisfy the current request.

Independent claim 59 further recites that geographical region is identified based on the record, transferring the record to a call center associated with the geographical region and identifying a third party provider of a product or service that located in the geographical region.

In the arrangement in each of the three independent claims, a caller is contacting a directory assistance system seeking a third party provider of a product or service *among a plurality of available third party providers **not** associated with the first service provider*. For example, this is the seeking of business or "yellow pages listing" in the directory assistance contacts. The listing or "third party provider of a product or service" is not a subdivision of the directory assistance system, but is an unaffiliated third party.

This arrangement provides an advantage over prior art systems, by recalling a caller's past history with similar requests for third parties and then makes the selection of

which third party among the plurality of available third parties to provide to the caller. This advantageously shortens the directory assistance call flow, by recalling past caller history and formulating the query response without the need to have a back-and-forth dialogue between the caller and agent.

For example, if a caller in the past has requested a restaurant and a particular third party provider (restaurant) of such service was provided, it was presumably done after several options were provided and the caller selected one of the plurality of available listings. See for example [0157] of the present invention. When the same caller calls back requesting a restaurant in the same area for example, the profile of data from the prior request may be recalled and the same listing could be provided immediately without the need for re-doing the previously conducted dialog. See for example [0162] of the present invention. This is particularly useful in combination with concierge services where a caller calls the directory assistance system on a regular basis for the connection information and concierge services related to the same listing. See for example [0165] of the present invention.

The cited prior art, namely Maloney is directed to an improved telephone call transfer system and method. In Maloney, a system is described where a buyer is *directly calling a provider of goods and services.* This provider may have numerous agents of CSR to handle the orders. However, because CSRs may have different levels of training and different geographic locations, frequently, calls must be transferred from agent to agent *within the same company.* See for example, column 1, line 59 - column 2, line 8.

Specifically, the call flow shown in column 9 of Maloney is not a call to a first provider requesting connection information for a third party provider of goods and

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services, but instead is a caller *directly calling a provider of goods and services,* and if

nee transferred within this same provider to another CSR of a different skill set or at a

different location.

The Examiner notes on page 5 of the Office Action that Maloney does not teach

or suggest that the third party being independent but that the Rogers reference teaches

such an element.

However, the Roger's reference is almost identical to the Maloney reference. in

Rogers, the problem being addressed is transfers of calls from one CSR within an

organization to another CSR *within the same organization.* See column 1, lines 28-46

Unlike Maloney which is directed to providing the second CSR with data about the call

so as to alleviate customer frustration, Rogers is addressing the specific problem

regarding the long distance carrier and billing implications when the call is transferred

between locations within the organization by moving the transfer controls into the

carriers rather than handling the transfers locally on the PBX (or CPE) See Column 2,

lines 10-28.

For example, the example cited in column 6, specifically states that the transfer is

between an operator for ABC in New York to another operator *for the same ABC

company* located in Phoenix.

As such, Applicants submit that even if the references were combined as

suggested by the Examiner, the resulting system and method still does not teach all of the

elements of the claimed invention as claimed in the independent claims. For example,

there is no teaching or suggestion in either Maloney or Rogers that discloses a first

service provider receiving a call from a caller using a communications device, the call

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including a current request for a suggestion of a third party provider of a product or

service among a plurality of available third party providers, desired by the caller, *where*

the third party providers are independent of the first service provider.

Likewise, there is no teaching or suggestion in either Maloney or Rogers that

discloses retrieving data concerning the manner in which one or more prior requests by

the caller to the first service provider were handled and utilizing that data *to select a third*

party product or service provider from among the plurality of available third party

providers in response to the current request.

For at least these reasons, Applicants request that the rejection of independent

claims 39, 46 and 59 be withdrawn. Also, as claims 40-45, 47-54, 56, 58 and 60 depend

from claims 39, 46 and 59 respectively, the rejection of these claims should be withdrawn

for at least the same reasons.

Separately, regarding claim 39, an additional element allows the caller to return to

the first service provider without terminating the call, automatically, in response to a

predetermined signal received by the first service provider from the caller's

communications device.

The Examiner states that this is inherent in Maloney. However, as noted above,

because Maloney does not even contemplate and third part not affiliated with the first

service provider, Applicants submit that this assessment is in error. Moreover, the

additionally cited Baurer reference is directed to an improvement on collect calls where

when an initial call is made for an operator assisted call, this call is forwarded to a second

operator (along with data related to the request) so that the second operator can smoothly

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and more effectively handle the call. Again, as with both Maloney and Rogers, there is

no third part service provider not affiliated with the first service provider.

For at least this additional reason, Applicants request that the rejection of

independent claim 39 and the related dependent claims be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that pending claims 39-

54, 56 and 58-60 are in condition for allowance, the earliest possible notice of which is

earnestly solicited. If the Examiner feels that an interview would facilitate the

prosecution of this Application they are invited to contact the undersigned at the number

listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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In paragraph 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected independent

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claims 46, 121 and 155 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over

Uppaluru (U.S. Patent No. 5,915,001) in view of Beckhardt et al. (U.S. Patent No.

6,085,166). Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner, and submit the

following remarks in response.

The present invention as claimed in the independent claims is directed to a

method for use in a calendaring system that includes providing at least one

service to a user related to scheduling a future event, and generating at least one

calendar entry on an appointment calendar. A plurality of appointment calendars

are stored, where at least one of the appointment calendars may be accessed by a

plurality of users having respective access levels including the user that scheduled

the future event with the operator.

Information identifying the plurality of users is stored along with access

levels associated with the respective users, where a first level of access is

afforded to the user that scheduled the future event with the operator and where a

second level of access is afforded to at least one other user that is invited to the

future event.

A request for selected access to a selected one of the appointment

calendars is received from a user, an access level is identified associated with the

user with respect to the selected calendar, a determination is made whether the

access level permits the selected access, and the request is met when it is

determined that the access level permits the selected access.

Such an arrangement allows a user of a directory assistance system, that

offers concierge services, to use the services to schedule future events, such as

restaurant reservations etc... The system may then allow not only the original user, but other users, such as those invited to the event, to view the calendar. The arrangement allows a first level of access to the user that scheduled the event, possibly to make changes etc..., whereas the other users are afforded a second level of access, such a read-only access level. See paragraphs [0103] and [0104].

The cited prior art, namely Uppaluru, discloses a system and method providing universal access to a "voice-web" voice-based documents. (Col. 2, lines 22-41). The voice web includes a calendar service, enabling users to maintain their calendar appointments via a calendar service database accessible via the voice web. (Col. 10, lines 58-67). To access the calendar service, a user calls the service, and provides an account number and PIN. (Col. 15, lines 52-6 1). The user's identity may be authenticated by comparing a voice sample to a stored voice signature. (Col, 16, lines 32-40).

The cited prior art, namely Beckhardt teaches an electronic calendaring with group scheduling that allows event schedulers to view the profiles of potential invitees (e.g. to a meeting) before calendaring the meeting for the other attendees. See column 2, lines 9-30 of Beckhardt.

However, neither of the cited prior art references teach or suggest an arrangement where a concierge service allows the scheduling of future event in a calendar with multiple access levels available to the users with access to the calendar.

For Example, there is no teaching or suggestion in either of the prior art references, either alone or in combination with one another, that teach or suggest

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providing at least one service to a user related to scheduling a future event, and

generating at least one calendar entry on an appointment calendar, where a first

level of access is afforded to the user that scheduled the future event with the

operator and where a second level of access is afforded to at least one other user
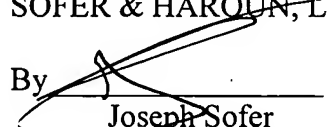
that is invited to the future event.

Applicants submit that the cited prior art does not teach all of the elements of the

claimed invention and respectfully request that the rejection of independent claims 45,

121 and 155 be withdrawn. Also, as claims 48-50, 154, 122-125, and 156 depend from

claims 45, 121 and 155 respectively, the rejection of these claims should be withdrawn

for at least the same reasons.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that pending claims 46,

48-50, 121-125 and 154-156 are in condition for allowance, the earliest possible notice of

which is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner feels that an interview would facilitate the

prosecution of this Application they are invited to contact the undersigned at the number

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Respectfully submitted,

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